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MONEY ISLAND.

ANDREW J. HOWELL, Jr.

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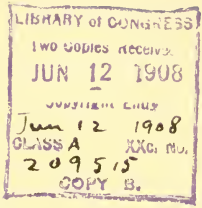

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ANDREW J. HOWELL, JR.

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The Little Island Among the Marshes

MONEY ISLAND.

This is the story of the buried treasure on Money Island, which lies in Greenville Sound, not far from Wilmington, North Carolina. It was told by Mr. Jonathan Landstone many years ago, and is a part of another story which follows, and which will explain something further about the mysterious little island that blinks in the sunlight and tries to hide its secret. The words are Mr. Landstone's and were written by him, to make sure that the story would be told correctly when the time came to publish it.

(Mr. Landstone's MS.)

My grandfather lived in Charleston, S. C. My home is in Philadelphia. In my boyhood I visited him several times. He was a fine old man, and was very fond of me. He used to tell me many stories of the good old colonial days. He said his father was a pirate; but that pirates in those days were gentlemen. Although they made game of the King's revenue on the high seas, it was regarded as nothing very wrong; and, although they played havoc with the Spanish shipping, it was but the assertion of a time-honored right of Englishmen, who never did love Spaniards. They were, many of them, ingloriously hanged, it is true, but it was by the King's officers, and not by the people.

However, not to defend pirates, or indeed to condemn them, I will tell you what my grandfather narrated about his

father, who was Capt. John Redfield. He was a gallant seaman, who consorted with Charles Vane and other doughty corsairs of those days of romance upon the seas.

When Captain Kidd forsook the King's commission to run down the pirates on the American coast, and organized his formidable squadron, Captain Redfield was chosen as his trusted counsellor, to accompany the brilliant leader on his adventures, He gave up his own ship, and was with Captain Kidd on many voyages, being entrusted with many a commission of importance.

One fine spring morning, while off the Carolina coast, Captain Kidd was pacing his deck, enjoying the warm splendor of the early sunshine. He had just returned from a successful voyage among the Spanish colonies of the south, and was gaily attired after the manner of a Spanish cavalier. He wore a cocked hat,

decked with a yellow band and a black plume, and a coat of black velvet which reached down to his knees. His trousers were blue, and were adorned by large golden knee-buckles. He wore massive silver buckles on his shoes. With his well-proportioned body, neatly trimmed beard, and steady, alert eyes, he presented as fine a picture of a man as could have anywhere been found. His manner had the dignity and repose of a beneficent prince, as he gave his orders for the day and received the salutations of his men.

The ship had passed the Cape of Fear, and was making in towards the shore-line, which Captain Kidd was observing with great interest. Some near-by point was evidently the destination. At length, at his orders, the sails were lowered and the anchor dropped. "We will lie here to-day," he remarked, "and have a little rest."

This information met the ready approbation of the men, who soon disposed themselves in careless groups about the ship. They knew it would be a day of idleness; because there were no forays to be made upon the land, for the reason that there were no human habitations in those parts. To the buccaneers the locality was well known as furnishing a safe retreat when retirement from active work was desired.

During the day there were singing, dancing, feasting. It was a day such as only a gallant corsair could have with his merry crew. The hours sped swiftly; and at dusk anchors were weighed, and the ship moved a few miles to the northward.

Captain Kidd, standing at the prow, called Captain Redfield to him. "Captain," said he, "I wish to entrust you with a most important service. I am

somewhat overstocked. I have not failed to be generous to the men; but still I do not feel at ease for a journey to New England. You appreciate the situation. I wish to make a deposit; and, as our interests along the coast are now beginning to be extensive, I desire to detail you as a resident of Carolina to keep an oversight for me. You will live on this coast near the location of to-night's deposit. You will find the climate agreeable, and other things favorable. I will hand you for your own use, in case of need, gold to the value of one thousand pounds. Is it agreeable, Captain?"

"Aye, sir; your wishes are my orders."

"Then, swear by the Holy Virgin that you will faithfully watch over the stuff; that you will not touch the chests or their contents, nor give any information or suggestion that might lead any one to their discovery—in fact, that you will

not disclose to any one the object of your residence in this secluded place."

Captain Redfield doffed his hat, and, raising his right hand, said, "Captain, I so swear."

"Your hand with the oath, Redfield. You are a trusty fellow, and I have the fullest confidence in you."

"Thank you, Captain."

"But, hold," Captain Kidd continued in his great benevolent voice, "I had forgotten the conditions. They are: You are to keep the engagement, if necessary, for five years. Our calling, as you know, is a little uncertain. At the end of that period, if I have not returned, you will be at liberty to take up the smaller chest to be deposited to-night, and use the contents, subject to such division—not to exceed one-half to each of us—as I may demand on my return. The same conditions will apply to the other chest for an

additional period of five years. In the event, however, of any special need, I may send an order for some of the stuff. But look you for my signet. See!" And he drew from his pocket a piece of resin upon which he had stamped his signet. "Keep that to prove the genuineness of my written orders. Is everything satisfactory, Redfield?"

"Everything is satisfactory, Captain."

Captain Redfield was a man of stalwart build. His height was six feet or more, and his movements were quick and firm. His face was beardless and wore an expression of stability and energy.

The two stood for some time upon the prow of the ship, and discussed the locality of the proposed hiding of the precious booty. Then Captain Kidd called two men by name, who promptly responded. He said, "I have trusted you in times past, and I desire to do so again.

I believe you will not betray my confidence. We are going to make another deposit to-night. I have long had the location in mind. Now, swear by the Holy Virgin that you will not disturb the stuff yourselves, nor in any way aid or abet any one else in doing so "

They swore with deep earnestness.

The group continued there awhile, until the moon rose and shed its silver splendor on the rolling water about them, touching the white-capped breakers with a soft and magic radiance as they dashed upon the near-by beach.

Then orders were given for the lowering of the boat.

Captain Kidd proceeded to the lockers of the ship, which opened into his cabin; and, with the aid of Captain Redfield, drew forth two iron chests. These he carried to the outer deck, and carefully lowered them to the boats by means of

ropes. From a respectful distance the sailors who had no hand in this work watched the proceedings with eager interest.

Firearms, shovels, and axes were then placed in the boat. Four rowers took their positions; and Captains Kidd and Redfield climbed down the rope ladder, and sat in the stern. Everything was ready, and word was given to ply the oars.

Soon the ship became a mystic shape in the dim distance; and, as the inlet was entered, it was lost entirely to view. By tortuous passages among the marshes, they drew up at the island—Money Island.

"Island the fourth!" said Captain Kidd jocularly. "Magnificent indeed will be the buccaneer's castle in Merry England when they all give up their wealth! Ha, a fine life this; but I suppose as fine a

one when the retired merchant from the South Seas brings his well-earned fortune to a corner of old England. Not Captain Kidd then, men, but John So-and-So, a wise and revered merchant. Ha! Do you see the game?"

The sailors sprang upon the land and pulled the boat well in from the water. The officers stepped lightly ashore, and railed against the low-lying branches, which whipped their faces. The trees were thick and low, making passage beneath them arduous and slow. However, the whole island was small and soon traversed; and, finally, a spot was selected as being accessible and suitable to the purpose.

Two deep holes about ten feet apart were dug, and the chests brought and deposited within them. Some of the earth was replaced; and then they sought two small trees to plant above the chests.

This was accomplished slowly and carefully, so that the growth of the trees would not be stopped.

At length the task was completed; and the little island bore within its bosom wealth sufficient to buy an earldom. The silence of the dreary solitude sealed the secret; and there was no man who might discover it, other than those who laid the chests in their earthly hiding place. The moon gave testimony to the hidden treasure, and bore its silent witness through the many decades that followed.

Upon leaving the island, they rowed to the mainland, which was but a short distance away; and there Captain Redfield hid in three places in the ground the money which Captain Kidd had supplied him for his own needs, and as compensation for his services until his return. The axes and shovels, also, were secreted in the woods.

It was past midnight when they returned to the ship, which set sail at break of day towards the north. By sunset they reached Albemarle Sound, the rendezvous of some companion buccaneers; and there waited for several days, feasting and engaging in jovial pastimes.

Meantime, a small sloop was procured for Captain Redfield; and, having been supplied with necessary provisions and household comforts, and manned by four sturdy men who knew naught of the buried treasure, but engaged for the service on goodly pay, it sailed for the captain's new home near Money Island.

Upon reaching their destination, the pioneer residents set to work at once to construct temporary quarters, and were soon provided with a comfortable house. According to the plans of the Commander-in-Chief, the men who accompanied

Captain Redfield were to understand that they were to engage in any service that might come to hand. They were to clear the land and till it, build houses and fences, and do such other work as might tend to prepare the locality for a more permanent settlement in case it should be desired to inaugurate such an enterprise.

The sloop gave them communication with the outside world, enabling them to visit Charleston, where a colony had been lately planted, and the several settlements to the north. It also afforded Captain Redfield opportunity to find a wife, whom he brought to Rindout, as he styled his new home. There the party lived in the quiet enjoyment of a life with nature, which abundantly supplied, during the frequent periods of recreation, every facility for hunting, fishing, and other sports.

One year passed, and another reached its seventh month; and the party had experienced nothing to arouse more than a passing interest. There had been no visitors to their settlement, not even an Indian.

On one October morning, however, a ship was seen lying off the inlet. This was a sight which caused a considerable stir among them. Captain Redfield debated the question within himself whether or not it was the ship of the Commander-in-Chief, and if it would be wise to go out and pay her a visit. But he hesitated, not wishing to jeopardize the commission imposed upon him.

Finally, a boat was seen approaching the shore, bearing a flag at its prow. In due course this was recognized as the ensign of Captain Kidd; and everything was hastily arranged to receive the leader with due honor and welcome.

As the boat drew near, though, it was discovered that he was not among the occupants; but on a seat at the stern, and with dignified mien, sat Max Brisbau, an old shipmate of Captain Redfield's, and a former companion in the service of Captain Kidd.

Brisbau alighted, and, extending his hand to Captain Redfield with suave complacency, stated that he had come upon a little service for Captain Kidd, and would later communicate his object. He showered courtly attentions upon his host. who exhibited unfeigned pleasure in welcoming him.

The visiting boat's crew consisted of six men, who enjoyed the companionship of Captain Redfield's assistants. mingling with them in their various pursuits. All the graces of hospitality were generously displayed, and mirth and good cheer possessed the men.

In the afternoon Captain Redfield was entertaining his guest in his private room. Brisbau said he would now advise him regarding the commission upon which he was sent; which was, in fact, none other than the execution of an order from Captain Kidd for the two chests that he had secreted in that neighborhood. Captain Redfield was to be awarded a generous portion, and his arduous service as guardian of the treasure would terminate. In the name of Captain Kidd, he graciously extended thanks for the faithfulness which Captain Redfield had shown in the discharge of his duties, and gave him assurances of the high esteem and confidence of the gallant leader.

The words were very pleasing; but Captain Redfield hesitated to make answer. "It may or may not be true," said he after a pause, "that Captain Kidd has buried possessions in this immediate lo-

cality. It is not to be denied that he has secreted treasure along the coast, but where? That is the question. I have some knowledge of the hiding place of some of it, but must have some written order over the signature and seal of the Captain to warrant me in disclosing it."

Brisbau promptly responded that he had such a communication from Captain Kidd, and proceeded to draw it from an inner pocket of his coat. He failed to find it, and with a great show of annoyance and a sudden recollection, he exclaimed with an oath that he had left it on the dressing table on his ship.

What was to be done? He would send immediately out to the ship, and have the paper brought to him. No, that was hardly worth while. He assured Captain Redfield that he would hand him the paper on their return to the ship, with Captain Redfield accompanying him.

That, Captain Redfield replied, would hardly be satisfactory. His obligation was to give information as to the hidden treasure only upon a well attested written order from Captain Kidd. Brisbau cajoled, implored, and vehemently asserted the injury to his feelings which the foolish reluctance of his friend caused him.

By intuition, Captain Redfield became convinced, on account of a certain weakness in the attitude of Brisbau in defending his request, that there were deceit and treachery in his conduct. Therefore, he coolly stated his determination to make no movement in the matter without the authority about which he had spoken.

At this Brisbau rose in great anger and exclaimed, "I shall have the money, or your life will be no more than Jack Kettle's, who flaunted his opposition before Captain Kidd himself!"

Hardly had he spoken when Captain Redfield in the flash of a thought for self-preservation, sprang upon him. Brisbau, equally as quick, met the onset and moved as best he could to avoid the grasp that threatened him.

They were quite alone. Redfield was entirely unarmed, but his opponent wore a sword at his side, with pistol and knife hanging from his belt. Having made the assault, the only safety for Redfield lay in his gaining the ascendency over his opponent by sheer physical effort, to enable him to keep Brisbau from using the weapons at his side. He missed the hold around both arms which he had planned, but firmly secured Brisbau's right arm, while his own right hand grasped the other's wrist. These advantages he succeeded in holding, although he could do nothing towards disarming

Brisbau or binding him more securely as a captive.

They struggled long and furiously. Redfield, whose position required his utmost exertion, gradually became exhausted; but he had a desperate determination to win the mastery over Brisbau, who was likewise weary from the struggle and doggedly angry. He feared a result disastrous to himself if he gave his opponent an opportunity to use his weapons.

Finally, just at a critical moment, Mrs. Redfield appeared. She started at the sight which met her eyes; but, seeing the situation at a glance, she ran back into the room out of which she had come, and quickly reappeared with a rope. With a woman's ready wit, she had found the means of bringing victory to her husband. She threw the rope around Brisbau's shoulders and wound it over his

arms until he was powerless to resist further. He was then easily bound and tied, body and legs, to a chair, grumbling his angry displeasure at the turn of affairs.

Captain Redfield paused a little while to recover his balance, and sat down to cogitate the matter of the disposition of his prisoner; and, also, to watch for the return of his men from an excursion they had gone upon for the entertainment of their guests. They were slow in coming, and an annoying suspicion grew upon him. He could not tell what the attitude of Brisbau's men might be; or if a conflict between them and his own men were to occur, what consequences might ensue. At any rate, he wished to avoid such a conflict if it were by any means possible; but he feared it could not be done. His good wife was greatly concerned, and urged upon him some amicable settlement with Brisbau, even to the

delivery of part of the treasure; for, after all, she thought, his claim might be just.

An hour later, one of Captain Redfield's men returned; and, to his great dismay, informed him that an agreement had been made with the visiting seamen which would affect their standing with him, but would work him no harm. He said that, upon the arrival of the other men, the matter would be discussed with the Captain, and meantime he would take no steps toward providing a defense for him in a conflict which was not likely to occur.

This disclosure was startling, and a shock to the spirit which had upheld Captain Redfield. His first impulse was to attack the man for what he considered the basest treachery, but he desisted. Parley with him he could not. He could only await the consequences of the compact which had been hinted at. But up-

on one thing he was determined—not to disclose any knowledge of the secreted treasure without first having in hand the credentials from Captain Kidd which he had demanded. His honor had been pledged to such a course, and he would not forsake his trust.

The men came. But they looked with indifference upon the bound prisoner. There was no display of the strong feelings which had been anticipated. The situation was obvious. So far as Captain Redfield was concerned, he felt that he had been forsaken, betrayed. There was no man who stood with him. In vain he pleaded with his men to stand by him in his defense against a most dastardly plan to wrong him. He then inquired their attitude towards Brisbau, and received an evasive answer.

At length he gave up the struggle, and sought to learn the purpose of the men

who had all now gathered before him; those of his own company, and those who had come with Brisbau. One of them as spokesman, a new-comer, informed him that he and his friends had accompanied Captain Brisbau for the purpose of securing some of the buried treasure, which was known to be in that neighborhood; and they intended to find the booty before leaving. He also stated that Captain Redfield's men, upon learning about the hidden treasure, had agreed to become confederates; and that their master would be treated in every way as a friend, and be given a full share of the treasure, provided he would properly inform them and Captain Brisbau, whom they intended to release immediately, as to its location. If he for any reason should refuse so to favor them, he and his wife would be treated as prisoners, and dealt with as might seem best—until, of course, he

would consent to aid them in their project.

The response that came was firm and unmistakable. The brave custodian averred that he would not betray his trust, even in the very face of death. Nor did days of urging and threatening turn him from his purpose.

Brisbau was released, and given to understand that the men were in control of affairs; and that his animosity towards Captain Redfield must cease.

The woods were scoured for the treasure. Days passed, and weeks, and the search was incessant; but there was no discovery made. Captain Redfield and his wife, now prisoners in chains, were urged and implored; but he could not be persuaded to give the information, although the mental tension he suffered was almost unbearable.

One day on a sudden determination, Brisbau set sail with his men and com-

panions, together with the prisoners. His purpose was to take a short cruise and then return; meantime allowing Captain Redfield a further opportunity to disclose his secret; otherwise—and he repeated his threat made upon his first day at Rindout.

The ship stopped at Charleston, and, almost immediately upon its arrival, it was seized under a suspicion of piracy, and a search made for evidences of the unlawful traffic. The prisoners were released through some favor of the authorities, but Brisbau and his men were imprisoned. In the hands of the king's officers their lives were in great jeopardy, but they finally escaped the scaffold.

As to Captain Redfield and his wife, the unexpected release was a most welcome boon. For her he had felt the tenderest and most agonized solicitude. The temptation to acquiesce in the demand of

his captors and thus free her from the trying situation came often to him with a weight under which he almost broke down. When it was over, the joy of freedom was as great as the suffering had been while they were prisoners. He lived thereafter at Charleston, and soon outgrew the suspicion with which he was at first regarded, of having been connected with the buccaneers. He determined to settle down to an honest, industrious life. My grandfather was born soon after.

Captain Redfield was never afterwards known to refer to anything connected with a pirate in conversation with any one; and I have never learned whether or not he ever afterwards visited Rindout. I know he was wealthy; but then he worked hard and saved his earnings, and I do not believe he increased his store from the hidden chests on Money Island. The story I have now written he told to my

grandfather in his old age, and, upon relating it, he urged the greatest caution in his use of it.

Twice my grandfather made unsuccessful efforts to find the chests. He urged that I, his grandchild, should keep the knowledge of the treasure as a family heritage; but that I might do as I liked about it. After giving the subject very careful thought, I have now given up the secret of Money Island, and have not withheld a single detail which was told me. Of course, nearly a century and a half has elapsed since the precious booty was hidden. The story, therefore, is old, but I do not believe it has suffered from age. Captain Kidd was executed in London not long after the hiding of the treasure, and his associates gave up their old calling; and probably no one has since disturbed the precious chests.

Now, as to when I first heard Mr. Landstone's story. It was when I was a boy in the early forties, and the events connected with its telling have modified its conclusion, as will presently be seen. I have heretofore spoken very little of the subject to any one; and when I have done so at all, it has been to one or two intimate friends as a matter of particular confidence. In my old age, however, I am going to let my tale forsake its hiding-place and become public property.

My parents owned a summer home on Greenville Sound not far from Money Island. To us children it was the very heart of life. The best pleasure of the year was confined to the four months spent there from the first of June to the last

day of September. We rowed, sailed, fished, swam, hunted, frolicked, and ran the whole gamut of youthful delights. Those good days are yet vivid in memory; and it is a matter of regret with me that my grandchildren—as fine boys and girls as ever lived—cannot have the same wild, wholesome fun at the Sound as fell to my lot when I was a boy.

The time that I now speak of, however, was about the middle of May, the balmy month of soft breezes and bright flowers. I had been particularly studious in school, and my father agreed to let me spend three days at the Sound in company with a young friend. We arranged our food supply, took the old family rockaway, and set out early in the morning, as happy a pair of boys as ever started on a project of pleasure.

After spending an hour or two at the Sound house, arranging our fishing tackle

and looking after the boats, which had been hauled up for the winter, we started out on a sail towards the beach. It was a fine day for sailing, and the breeze bore us away as smoothly and quickly as if we had been in a balloon. As we passed Money Island, we observed a boat moored on the south side, and tried to locate the occupants; but we could see nobody, and concluded that it belonged to a fishing party who had, for some reason, left the boat tied there.

We sailed on; and when we had gone perhaps half a mile away, I happened to turn around, and was surprised to see two men stealthily embarking in the boat with what appeared to be shovels and rods of some kind. This sight was too much for our youthful imagination. So we decided at once to change our course, and essayed to follow at a distance the movements of the other boat. This we

had no difficulty in doing; and we afterwards learned that we were successful in our efforts to avoid the suspicion of purposely following it.

The men sailed down the Sound a short distance to the south, and made for the shore in a little cove at a somewhat secluded place.

We were familiar with the locality, and decided to wait until later for a closer observation. Accordingly, we bore once again toward the beach, and enjoyed an hour watching the breakers roll upon the shore, and in picking up curios, such as are always to be found upon the sea beach.

Upon our return, we passed close to the little cove into which the boat had gone, and could readily discern through the trees a tent not far inland; in front of which were seated the two strangers, watching a pot hung over a fire made up-

on the ground. This excited an additional flutter of wonderment with us. Indeed, what we had seen, coupled with the current tradition regarding Money Island, soon wrought us up into a fever of excitement; for it was very suggestive of a search for the treasure on the island.

I had heard from my early childhood that Captain Kidd, the historic and lordly pirate, who reigned supreme upon the high seas during the seventeenth century, was supposed to have buried some of his booty on Money Island. Everybody was familiar with the tradition; and I doubt if there is, even now, a single person reared in the town of Wilmington, or in the vicinity of the Sound, who has not likewise been told the same indefinite story about the little island. But the presence of these two stangers, and their somewhat mysterious conduct, gave the

tradition a touch of reality such as it could never have otherwise had.

We concluded that these men had evidently some positive information on the subject, and were showing their confidence in that information by prosecuting a search for the hidden treasure, at much trouble and expense. This was clear to us, and we talked the matter over that night with eager interest. We surmised every possible case that might have furnished the strange visitors with a working clue to the discovery of the treasure. Speculation ran high. But there was one thing that we became agreed upon, and that was, to become, if possible, parties to the secret enterprise. We pondered with boys' shrewdness how this should be done. This we could not decide upon; but we determined to play a venture toward the desired end. The attitude of innocent curiosity seemed best suited to

our purpose. So we planned to draw up at Money Island in the morning if we observed that the men were there; and to approach them in an unsuspicious manner, as if we had just happened to stop at the Island without any definite motive. This should work as a capital ruse, and, we felt confident, it would initiate a connection on our part with the mysterious search.

That point settled, we concluded to investigate the tent and its occupants as well as we might under the cover of darkness, and we promptly set out upon that project. We approached within a hundred feet of the tent, and saw the men still sitting in the light of the fire at the tent door; but there was no discovery of importance. They were merely talking quietly and carelessly about some ship that one of them seemed to be interested in. We could hear their conversation

distinctly, and we were also able to take a good observation of their appearance.

One of them was a man upwards of sixty, of robust build and gray hair and beard. He had a kind face, which bore the aspect of one accustomed only to the quieter walks of life, unfamiliar with adventure and ill-suited to an enterprise such as they were now apparently engaged upon. The other man had a weather-beaten face with a long nose, and a swagger of manner which betokened the sailor. This, we afterwards learned, had been his occupation. We watched them for about an hour; but finally withdrew in the hope of making a better acquaintance in the morning.

Soon after daylight we began eagerly to watch for the boat, which appeared around a bend in the Sound after the lapse of an hour or so and headed straight for the Island. We loitered about the yard

a little while longer, and then made ready our yacht without any appearance of haste.

On setting sail, we made for the beach; but, upon reaching there, turned back at once and sailed for Money Island in an indirect course. We soon reached there and stepped upon the shore. The men immediately dropped their implements. They returned our salutation pleasantly. We observed with much surprise the disturbed state of the ground and the holes which had been dug; and then began to make inquiries as innocently as we could as to their object. Our plans of the night before began to work successfully.

By sheer force of persistence, we won our way into their confidence, and worked with them until late in the afternoon. For they were indeed on a determined search for Captain Kidd's buried treasure.

We were in constant expectation of

discovering the chests of gold—two iron chests, which Mr. Landstone, the elder gentleman, assured us he felt positive were there- But the discovery was not made, and they said this had been the fourth day of labor on the Island.

The conclusion was reached that, either the surrounding water had encroached upon that portion of the Island where the treasure had been buried, and had thus imposed an almost impossible barrier to its being unearthed; or that the chests had become imbedded beneath the massive roots of two dwarfed old oaks which stood gnarled and storm-worn in the centre of the island. To the task of removing these trees the men felt entirely unequal after their days of work; and, therefore, it was decided to wait a day or two, and approach the task of doing so, if at all, with renewed spirit.

Upon invitation, we boys accompanied

the men to their camp and had supper with them. We were entertained by stories of adventure and travel, of sea voyage, of Indian warfare; and, finally, after several requests of Mr. Landstone, with the story of Money Island. He said he would tell it upon condition that its secrecy would be kept inviolate, at least for many years. So, in the weird light of a large pine-wood fire among the trees, we had the story of Money Island, told in the living voice of a capital story-teller, in almost the same words as are used in the MS he gave me that night. and which has now been publicly printed.

When Mr. Landstone finished, we boys sat in breathless amazement, overcome by the glamour of romance which the story had thrown around the mysterious little island.

The old sailor forgot his pipe, which turned over and dropped its contents to

the ground. "Aye, sir," he exclaimed, "we will surely uproot those trees in the morning!" And that became the decision of us all.

I remember that, after a long pause, I asked, to reassure myself, "Mr. Landstone, do you really believe that story?" He laughed and said, "Well, you see I am on an undertaking I have had in mind for nearly fifty years. Yes, I believe those chests are there."

That was enough. I did not sleep an hour that night; and the next morning we were early at the task of searching for the treasure. And a stupendous undertaking it proved to be. All day we labored at one tree. The roots were massive and wide-spread, and the work of cutting and removing them required the utmost exertion. Finally, just before sunset, we completed the task, and began to dig for the treasure in the earth below.

Already water had begun to percolate into the hole, and ere we had gone much deeper, it flooded it so that we found it impossible to continue the excavation. Then we resorted to our sounding rod again for a last ray of hope, and almost immediately it struck something hard! Our spirits rose within us.

I tore off my clothes, and jumped into the water. After working for some time, with the aid of a shovel, I brought to the surface a piece of rusty sheet iron. Nothing more could be found. We gathered round the worn sheet of metal, and held a solemn consultation.

The conclusion was reached that the piece of iron which we found was in reality a part of one of Captain Kidd's chests, which had become rust-eaten and crumbled, and which had been torn asunder by the growing roots of the tree, and parts of it carried in various directions by

them as they had spread, scattering the contents through the ground.

We became animated with a new purpose; and the old sailor seized a shovel and began vigorously to throw more earth from the excavation; but darkness was falling, and we urged him to wait until the next morning.

"What about the sand already thrown out?" some one exclaimed at this juncture. The suggestion had hardly been offered before we all bent forward, and thrust our hands into the pile of wet, black sand lying about us.

I at once felt something round and suggestive. "Look at this!" I cried. It was a blackened gold coin! In the darkness we hurriedly sifted the sand with our fingers; and each one soon found several pieces of money.

With feverish energy, we thus labored until late in the night, meeting with con-

stant success; and, when we stopped, every one had a precious pile to carry back to the shore. The coins were all corroded and misshapen through the action of the salty mud in which they had lain, and the disturbance caused by the roots of the trees. A few silver coins were found, but all were in a very worn condition; some being little more than ragged discs of the thickness of paper. Others, or the remains of them, crumbled into a black powder at the touch of our fingers. The gold was in better preservation; and we secured a goodly store of it

We secreted our treasure in the woods on shore, and early the next morning returned to our work. I can well remember our exultant feeling as we set out in our boats. "Boys," Mr. Landstone called out, as we were sailing over the narrow stretches of water toward the island, "how do you feel?"

"I feel like—like—" I answered, rising in my seat and lifting my hat to cheer.

"None of that!" he said quickly—but I knew I was about to express the excited feeling of us all.

As to our further success, I would say that it was unabated during nearly the whole day. I think we secured every piece of precious metal that had been buried beneath the tree. The following day we uprooted the other tree, but failed to find any trace of more booty. We concluded that the remaining chest had probably been removed; but that is still an unsettled question.

Besides the coin, we had discovered the remains of much silver plate; but it was of little value, being almost entirely destroyed. But the gold—there was an abundance of it, and we were all made rich!

In the meantime our parents appeared

on the scene to learn the cause of our protracted absence from home. It is needless to say that there was no rod of correction held over us that day.

If I had taken care of my share of the treasure as I should have done after my father's death, I would be living in luxury and comfort to-day; but, even regretting my poor judgment, I can now thank a good Providence that I have been sustained through a long life, which has had an undue share of misfortune, by the splendid fortune which came to me in that happy May of long ago.

"The decaying hulks of blockade runners that rise a little here and there above the waves"

THE CONQUEST OF JAMESBY.

I reached home for tea a little late, and saw my young friend Jamesby in the back yard where he had gone to admire my fowls, in which I take a just pride. Old Henry, my colored servant, was playing the part of host; for there was no one else at home. When I made my appearance, the chickens had evidently become a matter of secondary interest.

Jamesby, a rising young banker of the city, was sitting on an empty box near the fence, and Henry was standing before him, leaning upon his cane, chuckling and talking in his customary deferential manner, which has always made him a very acceptable servant about my premises.

I approached without being observed, and did not hail them, for I did not wish to intrude too suddenly upon what appeared to be a very amusing subject of conversation. I heard Jamesby say laughingly, "Why, it was in the paper this morning—five or six columns of it! It was a great big yarn. I can't imagine why he never told you anything about it."

I knew what they were talking about. I was well aware that I had told my tale of Money Island for publication; for had I not been sought after by men, women, and children for every imaginable explanation and sidelight relating to the story which might have been omitted from the MS furnished the printer? And had I not been asked to repeat by living voice facts in the narrative which I had written, as I thought, with entire clearness in the published story? The boys had

all read the story, and I had been put to my wits' end to answer the questions asked by them; but I had assured several of them that if they would take a copy of the paper, go to the Island and there read it on the very spot where the treasure had been buried, and then and there take a careful survey of the situation, there would be no difficulty in their comprehending even the slightest detail. This seemed to me to be a very sensible suggestion; and I suppose some of them will carry it out.

While I really enjoyed the experience of having entertained so many people that day, I was fairly well fatigued when I reached home, where I thought I could at least be quiet and free from the constant inquiries of interested friends.

But here was Jamesby with designs against me! He had dashed my fond hopes of rest; although he was somehow

always considerate and endurable. I could never become impatient with him, even if I knew he was going to make demands upon me for more information concerning Money Island.

"What is Uncle Henry telling you, Jamesby?" I asked on drawing closer to them.

"Oh," he answered in a somewhat self-conscious manner, "he was about to tell me of an experience of his in money digging."

Now, I had heard old Henry tell that story before. It was one which seemed to justify his very sober ideas as to money getting by any other means than by one's daily work.

"Well, Henry," said I, taking my seat also on the box, "did you really ever dig for money?"—as if I had never before heard him say anything about it. The

implied doubt would, I knew, make him all the more ready to talk.

He replied promptly, with a grin of interest, "Yes, sah, cose I tried money diggin'."

Then he paused as if to await an invitation to proceed. "Go on, Uncle Henry," urged Jamesby.

Henry shifted his position, and, leaning upon his cane from another angle, went on: " 'Twas dis away. Once uponer time me an' John Gomus an' John Flowers, we was round at Mr. Holmes' stables, right back of Mr. Kidder's whey I uster keep my horse and kyart; dere was woods right dere den, sah, an' a graveyard; an' I had a horse and kyart of my own. So one evenin' an ole white 'oman come fum de Sound, an' she tole us that a sperit had done tole her whey some money was buried; an' she wanted us to come down dere and dig it up; she

couldn't dig for it, but she knowed whey 'twas--de sperit had tole her. So we got togedder and made a club to go down—three of us. De place was on Wrightsville Sound, not fur from Mr. Wright's place.

"De sign was, dat one read de Bible back'ards, and no one speak—all hadter go by signs, an' dat'd keep de sperits fum pesterin' us. John Gomus, he had de rod goin' roun', an' foun' a place to stick it. I dunno why he stick it whey he did. De rod pinted right down dere; and right whey de rod pinted we digged. When we commence diggin', it was about half-past eight o'clock, and we worked hard, sah. We digged a hole big enough to set a small house in. John, he kep' bearin' on de rod, an' de rod it kep' goin' down. Den de rod at las' struck sumpn; and we was so glad, thinkin' we'd struck de pot! Every one was rejoiced! We didn' talk,

but jes fling up de dirt! An' when we dig down dere, sah, what you spose 'twas. Nothin' but a big ole cow's horn. An' after all dat diggin'! We done an' digged a hole 'bout fifteen or twenty feet across, and goodness knows how deep; an' 'twas 'bout four in de mornin' before we quit. We pack up an' come back home, feelin' jes as cheap as a wet chicken.

"De ole 'oman come 'roun agin, an' tole us dat de money was dere; fer de sperit had tole her agin 'twas dere. But we warn't anxious to try for it agin. We thought we done enough."

Old Henry chuckled, and limped away; and we both laughed heartily at his droll yarn. Jamesby enjoyed the tale particularly; and, although I felt that it might somehow be at my expense, I was duly amused.

When Jamesby descended from his hilarious heights, he turned to me rather

gravely, and said, "Now, I want it from your own lips; did you really dig for money on Money Island?"

I answered, "I did."

"And," he continued, "was that a true story you told about it?"

"Now, Jamesby," I replied, "I really cannot endure this doubt cast upon the truthfulness of my story. I decline to discuss the matter. You have read the paper, and you know me as the author of the story."

"But," he added in rather a comical tone, "there are some things which (with all due respect for your trustworthiness) call for a more positive confirmation."

I knew I would not have written anything on so important a subject without proper consideration; and he knew it too. However, I realized the fact that an effort to believe such a story as I had offered to the public may have made a somewhat

weighty demand upon credulity, at least with some people. To answer his last suggestion, I merely drew out of my pocket a copy of the "Savannah Morning News", containing an account of a stranger's mysterious movements about Warsaw Island near Savannah, and his sudden disappearance, leaving good evidence that he had carried with him a hidden treasure found there, and which tradition had stated lay upon the Island. I also reminded him of the fact that Dutch Island near Savannah is full of what are known as "treasure holes", which have been made by persons seeking the buried booty of the pirates of the olden times. He knew all about these; and he had also heard that some of the enterprising explorers into the mysteries of that island had been successful.

But Jamesby was still incredulous. So I turned the conversation to my fowls;

and he was very ready to admit that I had told the genuine thing in describing to him some of the excellent points of my prize birds. There was no doubt that I could exhibit several specimens which any fancier would be proud of.

Jamesby remained to tea, so that we could go to the lodge together, and I enjoyed the quiet stroll down town with him. We had hardly entered the hall, though, before the historian of the town, who is also a leading Mason, approached me regarding my Money Island revelations. "Sir," he said, "I regard it throughout as a most interesting and plausible narrative; and I am glad we have been favored by being allowed to read it. I have made a study of the pirates who infested our coast in the early colonial days, and I know that this section, particularly the lower region of the Cape Fear, was a favorite rendezvous for

them. It is known upon most reliable information that there are immense quantities of captured treasure secreted along the coast, and the wonder is that there have not been some really serious efforts to find it."

Another gentleman added, "Yes, and they also buried treasure further down South; for at my old home (and I speak the honest trath) I have stood in the hole from which my friend, Mr. Coachman, unearthed accidentally a small fortune, which gave him a very comfortable start in life."

The conversation lingered in this absorbing vein until the meeting was opened, much to my relief; for I had been surfeited with the subject of money finding for that day, at least. But that was not all; for, during the solemnity of the opening exercises, I heard some one telling, in an undertone, of a negro who had

found a roll of old bank notes in a log which had been hauled to a saw mill to be cut.

The next day I was still aware that I possessed an unusual attraction; and I resigned myself patiently to the service of all my inquiring friends. Jamesby actually stopped by my office to walk up with me at lunch time He was willing to move along slowly with me, for now in my old age I find I have to walk slowly. I knew it would have been more natural for him to have gone on briskly; but he was polite and assured me that the pleasure of my company was better than too much time spent at his meal.

We stopped on the way at a newspaper office. The editor and proprietor had observed our approach, and they were awaiting us with looks of amused interest. "Hello!" the proprietor said cheerily, "you have really stimulated the en-

terprise of the town. Why have you kept so reticent on that subject all these years?"

Of course, I knew what subject was referred to; for I had been living for those two days in an atmosphere filled with the phantoms of hidden gold, buried treasure, marvelous discoveries, pirates and other engaging topics of thought; and I now looked for nothing else.

"In my opinion," he continued, "it was a very good story. Of course, it goes without saying that it is true. I tell you, sir, that it is my judgment that this whole section of coast line is rich in gold. Not only did those pirates bury gold here, but, during the Civil War, the Confederate blockade runners, when fearing capture, were known repeatedly to throw gold into the sea along the beach, sometimes by the keg full; and not one dollar's worth of it has ever yet been recov-

ered, so far as I can learn. It is all right there where they dropped it. And besides that, at least on one occasion, it is a well proven fact that a chest of gold was buried by the commander of one of the blockade runners in the marsh grass on the shore not far below Wilmington; and there is no evidence that it has ever yet been unearthed. In fact, all knowledge of the exact spot has been lost, I understand."

"Yes," interposed the editor, "it is all quite reasonable; and, as something germain to the subject, I can cite an interesting instance. When, soon after the War our old Confederate naval captain bought his home on Greenville Sound and was preparing to build his residence, he had the old house which stood upon the site torn down, and, upon the carpenters coming one morning to begin the erection of the new building, they found an im-

mense excavation right where the old house stood. Now, that old building was in former years used by a Portuguese as an inn for the entertainment of sailors from the vessels in the port of Wilmington; and, there being certain traditions in regard to some money having been buried beneath it, it was natural to conclude that the excavation resulted from an energetic effort to find the money. The hole was made at night, but by whom it has never been found out. The incident was shrouded in a mystery which has never been cleared."

We talked still further along that vein, the editor emphatically asserting his assured belief in the possibility of recovering quantities of gold from the seashore below Wilmington, and from the decaying hulks of blockade runners that rise a little here and there above the waves, where they met a disastrous check to

their efforts to slip into the harbor.

As we started out again upon the street, Jamesby said, "Well, sir,—pardon my frankness—but I must say that I have never found your company so interesting before; and I shall be equally frank in saying that—I have never been able yet to believe half the tales I have heard about the mysterious discovery of buried treasure. There is something so unsubstantial about most of them. Of course, there may be some exceptions, and—"

"Jamesby," I interrupted in good humor, "don't let your frankness expire for the lack of the proper courage. Let your speech continue during the whole run of an honest statement. But it's all right. I have some indisputable proofs—"

"Good morning!" It was young Riggins who joined us. "I read that story of yours, sir. It was good, I must say. It is just like something that happened

in my own personal experience. A few months ago, I was down at Homosassa, Florida; and, while I was there, some clam diggers discovered a large chest of old Spanish coin. They sold them to the Government for thirty thousand dollars, and have now retired from the clam business."

That was a tale rather to the point, and Jamesby received it soberly; but I laughed out of sheer appreciation of another good yarn.

I did not see Jamesby for several days. I knew it was his busy season; but I really wished to know how he fared. So, I decided to look him up. He was a happy, enthusiastic, ingenuous young fellow, and I had become quite accustomed to having his cheerful company occasionally.

I found him sitting at his desk in intense abstraction; but he soon observed me standing before him, and quickly

arose with a hearty welcome, such as he alone knew how to extend.

"I tell you, sir," he said enthusiastically, "it is a magnificent project!"

"What is?" I answered. "I don't know—"

"Oh," he continued, absently, "I forgot; it was my brother I was talking with. But I have investigated thoroughly the whole subject of those blockade runners, and I believe the prospect of success is worth a giant effort for the recovery of some of that money from the sea. There must be untold quantities of it lying there, inviting even a meagre attempt to get it. The boats can be chartered cheaply; and I have learned that the necessary divers can be secured on an equitable division of the spoils. There are many details of the organization of the enterprise which I have thought out."

His voice had an eager ring, and his eyes sparkled with interest.

"Jamesby, my boy," I answered calmly, "you are decidedly on the right track. I wish you all good fortune."

LBFe '09

MONEY ISLAND.

ANDREW J. HOWELL, Jr.

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